STRATEGIC THINKING: A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

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The ever increasing intensity of gang violence in El Salvador carried out by Maras poses a significant threat to national and regional security and if left unchecked, will continue to negatively influence the long term peace and prosperity of the Nation. This uncontrolled phenomenon has evolved into an enormous network of organized crime with transnational character reaching organizational levels, which has implemented an array of different techniques designed to obtain money and recruit new members.

The problem of Maras in El Salvador is a situation that is overflowing into Public Security and requires forceful answers from State government; however, current implemented policies are not as effective as intended. The failure to establish opportune and effective strategies by Government centric Public Security institutions supported by other state institutions will continue to negatively influence the long term peace, prosperity and collective potential of the nation and its viability within the region and international community.

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STRATEGIC THINKING: A PROPOSAL TO REDUCE VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

> We are still a long way from the time when our conscience can be certain of having done everything possible to prevent crime and to control it effectively so that it no longer does harm and, at the same time, to offer to those who commit crimes a way of redeeming themselves and making a positive return to society.

—Pope John Paul II[1]

The world is facing and dealing with a different kind of warfare that is unconventional in nature and involves a number of non-state actors with no accountability to anyone or anything other than their own self centered interest. This dynamic is dominant in virtually every global region to include but not limited to, the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Among the most complex of these non-state actors are first to third generation street gangs with direct and indirect association and linkage to Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs). In this new environment, the national security, sovereignty and stability of nation states is threatened daily by illicit activities and becoming a main issue for the government and political outline.[2]

Many Latin-American countries are dealing with problems connected with violence associated with organized crime to include: drug trafficking, smuggling of weapons and people, money laundering, tax evasion, generalized public corruption and other forms of non-conventional delinquency like Gangs or Maras. The latter exists in Central America and Mexico and has major and violent impacts on the people.[3]

El Salvador is immersed in a criminal crisis generated by Maras that at the moment constitutes one of the main National Security problems. This unconstrained phenomenon has transformed into a great network of organized crime with transnational

character, reaching organizational levels, which have implemented different techniques to obtain money and recruit new members.

In the last 10 years, El Salvador has evolved into one of the most violent nations on the planet. In 2009, El Salvador's rate of 4,365 homicides was the highest in the last ten years [4] at a ratio of 63 homicides for each 100,000[5]. These crimes stem from common and daily delinquency occurring throughout a violent society and are directly linked to Maras criminality. In addition to homicides, other violent crimes include intra-family violence, robbery, extortion, and kidnapping.[6]

To a degree the El Salvador government had been overwhelmed by Maras organizations consisting of criminal bands that practice extortion, assassinate, sell drugs, and in essence function like a parallel State by creating non-standard systems similar to taxation and implement their own rule of law. As a result, these malicious acts have forced significant portions of the population to migrate to other cities in the country, or emigrate out of the country, especially to The United States of America.

The problem of Maras violence in El Salvador not only affects Salvadorans who live in the country, but also those who live outside the country. Maras members force Salvadorans who live in the United States of America to pay extortions in exchange for the guaranteed safety of their relatives that remain in El Salvador.

The purpose of this investigation is to first present the background and the origins of the problem; second, to frame the problem by analyzing factors that motivate young people to join these organized groups with emphasis on violence, gang structure and organization, and transnational character; finally, this section will conclude with a

summary of the problem, the current government strategy and associated end state to include recommended solutions.

Background

Figure 1 Member of 18th Streets and MS-13 Gang or Maras in El Salvador.[7]

The term Maras is derived from the Greek term "Marabunta", which means bitter water, and is associated with a group of ants characterized by attacking their victims in groups by collectivity, expanding, invading and devouring everything in their path.

Some academics and gang experts continue to debate the exact definition of the term "gang" or "Maras" and the types of individuals that are determined or considered to be Maras members or Mareros. There is a concordance that Maras are generally characterized by named groups of individuals, identified by symbols such as common clothing, graffiti, and hand signs that are unique to the Maras. Typically, Maras are

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involved in criminal activities ranging from the defacing of buildings with graffiti, vandalism, petty theft, robbery, and assaults, to more serious criminal activities, such as drug trafficking, drug smuggling, money laundering, alien smuggling, extortion, home invasion, murder, and other violent felonies.[8]

Maras are defined as "a group of people who form an alliance for a common purpose and engage in violent or criminal activity."[9] Therefore, the main characteristic of a Maras member is the use of violence in determined forms, beginning with the initiation process in the Maras until they occupy a position of leadership in the Organization. The underlying reliance and practice of the use of violence as a means to achieve self centered goals and interests make**s** these Maras dangerous, as they will not hesitate or have any concern in using violence to carry out different criminal activities against rival Maras, the general population, and State institutions.[10]

At the end of the internal El Salvadoran conflict in the 80's, in which approximately more than 60,000 people were assassinated (most of them civilian) and over 1.5 million people fled the nation to other countries, to include most prominently The United State of America[11], the existence of Maras in El Salvador began to evolve and become dominant. The aforementioned internal conflict ended by a Peace Agreement signed in 1992 by the Government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and negotiated by the United Nations. Although, the Peace Agreement ended the armed conflict, it did not address the residual problem associated with poverty, health, atrophied security and poor education. While the Salvadoran economy grew significantly after the war, the continuation of social problems escalated

into a new type of bloodshed which in essence has become an enduring form of new warfare executed by Maras or gangs.

Maras in El Salvador and Central America "originated in Los Angeles, California, during the early 1990s, and were formed by young immigrants whose parents fled to the United States to avoid ongoing instability and violence in Central America during the 1980s. Once in the United States, many of these young immigrants were exposed to and became involved with Maras in rough neighborhoods where they grew up. Subsequently Maras began moving into all five Central American republics in the 1990s, primarily because convicted felons were being sent from prisons in the United States back to their parent's countries of origin."[12]

These deportees, also called returnees, became the impetus for a number of catastrophic factors in El Salvador, because many of them had never traveled to El Salvador before. They arrived with their impressive tattoos, their language, and their arrogant attitudes, and quickly introduced Mara culture, illegal drug consumption and distribution, extortion, car-theft rings, burglary, and contract killing into a society ripe for exploitation.[13]

Prior to the 90's Maras were a group of people mainly comprised of young people, especially from schools or communities who shared a common social identity characterized mostly by their quarrels (disturbances) at activities such as sporting events, dances, parties, parades and other social gatherings. Traditionally, Maras were young people who lived in the same community where they grew up together, and united and organized into groups to defend themselves against young people of other

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communities. Therefore, Maras initially consisted of single youthful groupings in schools, neighborhoods or in local communities.

After the 90's, the Maras, influenced and infiltrated by young returnees from California, grew dramatically. They changed radically and became "Territorial Institutions with identities based on a permanent state of war with an adversary Mara. Their goal was to keep their neighborhoods under control by fighting or killing intruders as a matter of pride and to ensure their extortion and drug businesses."[14]

As time passed, Maras began to represent their own society, a substitute for the families and communities that abandoned or ignored them; Maras asserted their roots and became a united and structured way of maintaining family identity.[15]

In El Salvador and other Central American countries, the predominant Maras are Mara Salvatrucha or MS-13 and Mara 18 Street or M-18, both initiated in Los Angeles, California.

The Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) was founded in schools and streets where Salvadoran immigrants had to compete with other ethnic groups. Mara Salvatrucha was formed predominantly by Salvadorans and a few Guatemalans, and their name (title) is associated with their origin, since according to their members, all the terms used in El Salvador and are suitable and identify them. Maras is a slang term for gang and means a group of friends; "truchos" is shrewd for Salvadorans and is used because they must be always skillful, ready or alert. The number 13 is linked to and references the Mexican Mafia in the north which used the N-14th, for this reason they use "M" the thirteenth letter of the Castilian alphabet, except the letters "ch and ll", that do not appear in the

English alphabet. In this sense, north and south Maras of California are staunch enemies.[16]

The 18th Street gang or Mara 18 (M-18) is comprised of young people of diverse nationalities, including Mexican, Salvadoran, Nicaraguan, Asian, American, white and brown, and are also known as "the International". The 18th Street gang grew by expanding its membership to other nationalities and races, and was among the first multiracial, multiethnic gang in Los Angeles. It is considered the greatest gang because it contains more than 10,000 members. Their origins have been especially related to Mexican immigrants and their descendants,[17] but some argue with this premise because according to their own members, the M-18 gang has a Chicano origin and not a Mexican origin.

Maras have tattoos everywhere on the body and use earrings like signals of rebellion to the rest of the society, meeting on corners in districts and colonies to pronounce themselves in specific form between members of a same organization. Overtime, Maras' members have evolved and have changed more common characteristics, like their clothes; for example, they no longer wear eccentric trousers and elect to dress like normal youth, and no longer use tattoos or earrings to disguise their gang membership.

Each Maras have communication codes (hand signs and written) that identify them and make distinguish them from other people. They also create different drawings on neighborhood walls to show who the leader is and which Maras they belong to. (See Figure 2)
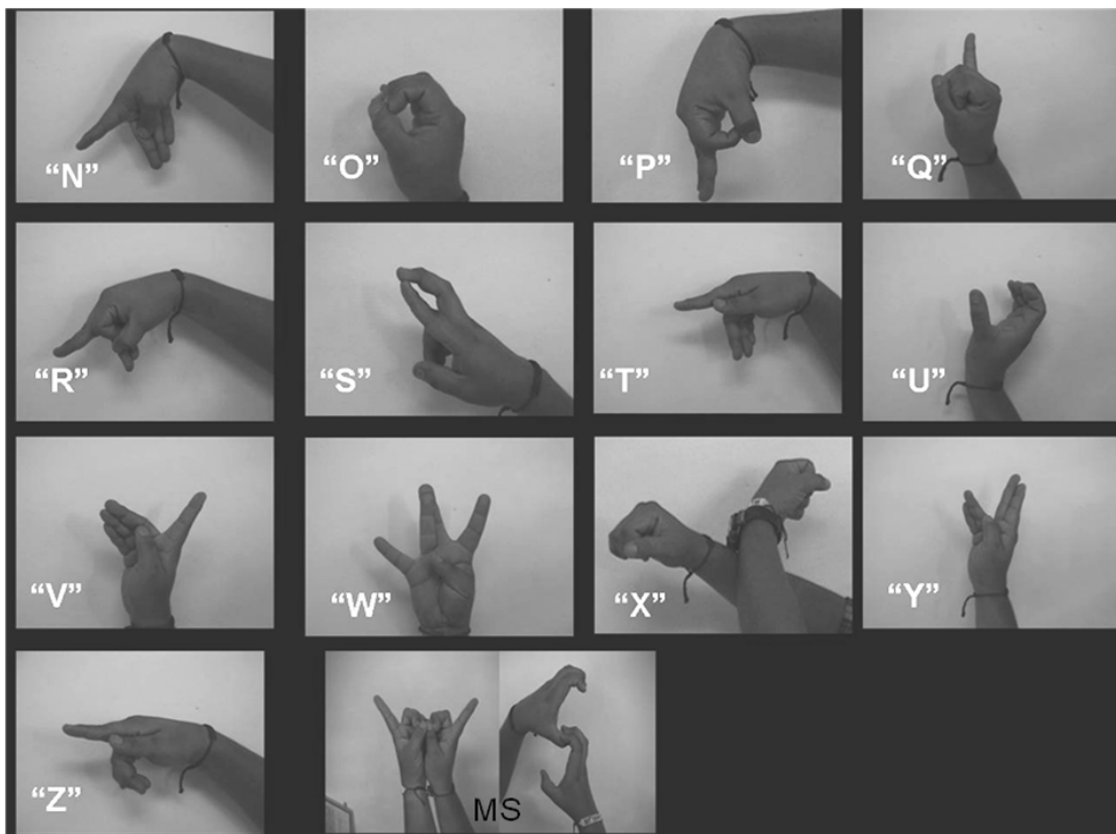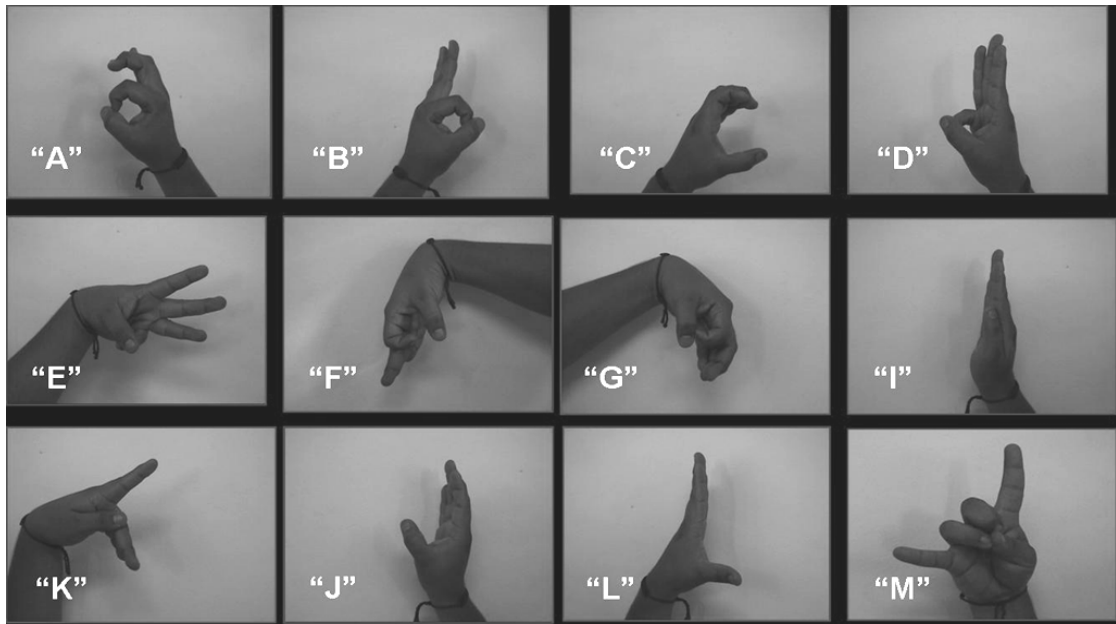
Figure 2 Hand signs used by Member of 18th Streets and MS-13 Gang or Maras in El Salvador.[18]

Today, Maras form in active groups, (Homies or Homboys) comprised of children, adolescents, young people and adults ranging from age 8 to 24 who are dedicated to illicit activities like armed assaults, aggravated robberies, homicides, murders, extortions, traffic and possession of weapons (even military grade weapons), consumption, traffic and possession of drugs (some are also linked with organized crime.)

Homies always stay in their own Mara area. If they enter another part of the city it is a tremendous risk, because another Maras can attack or kill them at any moment. The Mara codes are extremely violent, in order to gain respect, Maras members have to prove their guts or madness.[19]

Maras are real organizations that break the law in important areas of national territory, especially in big cities. Maras have a complex and efficient organizational structure for carrying out of their activities. They clearly establish controls with intention, objectives and unity of effort, and exert efficient control over self selected territory. In these areas the local populace is significantly influenced by their permanent presence, control and influences.

Maras don't have a vertical leadership structure, resources, and necessary power to manage illicit activity characteristic of organized crime; they are organized in small subgroups called clika (Clicas) in which any person can act as the unique leader. While some Maras are involved in the street distribution of drugs, few Maras members are involved in high level criminal drug distribution enterprises run by drug cartels, syndicates, or other sophisticated criminal organizations.[20]

During the past decades, consecutive Salvadoran governments have tried to restrain the Maras. Since the 1990s, the Salvadoran government developed some corrective programs known as Strong Hand (Mano Dura) and Super Strong Hand (Super Mano Dura) that led to the capture and imprisonment of thousands of Maras members. But these programs have not stopped the Maras mainly due to corruption at the highest levels of government which has allowed many leaders to go free and or conduct business from behind bars.[21]

In El Salvador, prosecutors can send Maras members to prison for two to five years for simply joining a Maras. Wearing tattoos or using Mara hand signals can result in a similar sentence, and carrying arms or explosives incurs a penalty of up to six years. From July 2003 to 2004, Salvadoran police registered some 19,275 arrests on Maras-related charges. Over the past five years El Salvador's prisoner population has increased to 12,000 inmates, 40 percent of whom belong to street Maras.[22]

Today, Maras are a transnational threat, and MS-13 and M-18 members are spread throughout South and Central American countries and many cities in USA and Europe. Maras, marked with their hallmark tattoos and violent outbursts are particularly visible in North America, and analysts are still uncertain just how interconnected they really are. In the United States, the strongest Maras are based in Southern California, the northeast, and the mid-Atlantic, including the Washington, D.C., metro area. However, U.S. Maras pale in comparison to their counterparts further south. Fueled by Maras members deported from the United States, Maras in El Salvador and other Central American countries terrorize police and residents in hundreds of communities across the region.[23]

El Salvador is influenced by organized groups or Maras, who commit criminal activities that alter public order and threaten National Security, and are connected by groups of organized crime, going beyond a superior level of criminality fomenting violence and national chaos. Further contributing to this circumstance is the existence of weak public institutions responsible for security that are vitiated by the phenomenon of the corruption, which at the moment is difficult to control due to the lack of operability in these institutions.

The government end state is to diminish the phenomenon of Maras that permit the income of a peaceful atmosphere and tranquility in the population of El Salvador and allow national development. Also to obtain the reintegration of young people who are in Maras to a productive life in the country.

Framing the Problem

Figure 3 Factor involved insecurity in El Salvador.

The Maras phenomenon in El Salvador is extremely complex and includes an extended list of factors which are not totally facilitated nor exacerbated by these groups. "Many factors have shaped this particular panorama of violence, which is both heterogeneous and dynamic. The World Bank, for example, attributes the rise in Central American violence to a complex set of factors, including rapid urbanization, persistent poverty, inequality, social exclusion, political violence, organized crime, post-conflict cultures, the emergence of illegal drug use and trafficking and authoritarian family structures."[24] It is possible to associate these factors to cultural violence, poverty, social marginalization, armed conflict, migration, family problems, and a lack of employment opportunity. Additional factors include poor evolutionary development, exclusion from educational systems, drug use and trafficking, ineffective institutions, lack of concrete actions and weapons smuggling.[25] All these factors have led to the Central American region currently having the highest rates of criminal violence not only in Latin America but throughout the world:

Estimated Homicide Rates Per 100,000 Inhabitants
(2000-2008)

Country	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Belize	19	25	30	24	27	28	31	30	32
Costa Rica	6	6	6	7	7	8	8	8	11
El Salvador	45	40	39	40	49	62	65	57	52
Guatemala	28	30	32	37	38	44	47	45	48
Honduras	n/a	n/a	69	65	35	37	46	50	58
Nicaragua	9	10	10	12	12	13	13	13	13
Panama	10	10	12	11	10	11	11	13	19

Figure 4 Estimated Homicide Rates per 100,000 Inhabitants in Central American.[26]

Social Marginalization. Maras often control the most marginalized urban areas. In some cases, poverty levels in these areas directly enable and contribute to Maras' activities. Other factors that contribute to Mara's domination include the disintegration of family, social and community structures, lack of basic services, and lack of opportunities

for jobs or recreational activities. Maras are able to control these territories, which are mostly remote areas, with relatively little challenge from law enforcement. [27]

Lacks of opportunity for young people, in many areas with Maras presence results in unemployed youth, and Maras offer an alternative means to acquire goods, and offer social acceptance to these otherwise marginalized youth. As a result it is not necessary to force the recruitment of these people. [28]

Youth exclusion of system education, in many cases, coupled with poor attendance records and dismal grades by students, makes their retention in school systems difficult. Forty percent of Salvadoran children drop out of school before grade five, and typically some Mara members only complete the ninth grade. [29]

Reactive programs. The El Salvador government has been primarily reactionary in response to Maras activity with hard-line law enforcement programs. In the worst cases, there are arbitrary detentions, torture, and extra-judicial executions. These programs have not deterred Maras from forming and operating, but rather have spurred Maras to consolidate, sometimes coming into direct confrontation with the State. [30]

The lack of legitimate employment opportunities forces the Maras to finance themselves through criminal activities and drug trafficking. Without access to illegal economic options, these groups have little or no other sources of income. [31]

Marginalization of the family, with their parents working elsewhere, there are numerous cases of children being raised by abusive and negligent relatives who do not fully accept them as family members, and treat them as outsiders. This can cause fear and or rebellion, which may drive some children to the streets to seek relief.[32]

Weak and ineffective criminal and judicial systems coupled with corrupt police, and lacking social and security services result in Maras becoming bolder and taking on roles normally reserved for the state. This includes extortion (taxes) from businesses, bus drivers, and others who want to do business in the neighborhood. In extreme cases, Maras begin to exercise their own non-standard justice systems, demanding certain behavior from the citizens and sanctioning those who do not obey.[33]

Smuggling of weapons: small arms are the weapon of choice for controlling territories, trafficking of goods and drugs. In most cases, Maras have easy access to all kinds of weaponry, even those intended exclusively for armed forces. Weapons propagation is made easier by little or no state weapons control, easy access to trafficking routes, and the availability of weapons caches associated with the civil conflicts of the 1980s.[34]

Drug use and trafficking, the international drug trade is associated with the Maras problem in El Salvador on some levels. El Salvador serves as a critical point of trans-shipment of drugs originating in Colombia and destined for United States markets, which has created prosperous narcotic trafficking and organized crime networks throughout the country. The resulting flow of drugs into El Salvador may also contribute to higher levels of drug consumption and addiction in the country, which in turn may lead to more Mara violence.[35]

The above mentioned factors coupled with personal motivations of young people stimulate them to belong to the Maras. These motivations are: identification, reference, solidarity, company and even the possibility of having greater visibility in society. Among the main motivations, admission to the Maras creates an opportunity to get along with

others and allows for a sense of belonging. In essence, initiation into the Maras may result from the type of relationships that gestate within it and allow youth to experience strong feelings of cohesion. Incorporation can also enhance the lifestyle that gangs enable. Gang membership allows young people to gain income and resources by easier means, including different kinds of criminal activity which provides economic options and fulfills needs.

The cumulative effect of gang activity emboldened and facilitated by an array of social factors described above creates a war like scenario. To summarize the problem, Manwaring describes this phenomenon in the following manner:

> This kind of war is defined as acting, organizing, and thinking differently from opponents to maximize one's own advantages, exploit an opponent's weaknesses, attain the initiative, and gain freedom of movement and action. In these terms, non state war exploits, directly and indirectly, the disparity between contending parties to gain relative advantage and uses terrorist and insurgent methods. Moreover, it can have political-psychological and physical dimensions, as well as lethal and nonlethal dimensions. Additionally, it can have both ideological-political objectives and commercial (search-for-wealth) motives, and it is constantly mutating. As a consequence, there are no formal declarations or terminations of conflict; no easily identified human foe to attack and defeat; no specific territory to take and hold; no single credible government or political actor with which to deal; and no guarantee that any agreement between or among contending protagonists will be honored. In short, the battle space is everywhere and includes everything and everyone. In this context, the harsh realities of contemporary instability and chaos are caused by myriad destabilizers. The causes include increasing poverty, human starvation, widespread disease, and lack of political and socioeconomic justice. The consequences are seen in such forms as social violence, criminal anarchy, refugee flows, illegal drug trafficking and organized crime, extreme nationalism, irredentism, religious fundamentalism, insurgency, ethnic cleansing, and environmental devastation. These destabilizing conditions tend to be exploited by militant nationalists, militant reformers, militant religious fundamentalists, ideologues, civil and military bureaucrats, terrorists, insurgents, warlords, drug barons, organized criminals, and gangs working to achieve their own nefarious purposes. Those who argue that instability, chaos, and conflict are the results of poverty, injustice, corruption, and misery may well be right. We must

remember, however, that individual men and women are prepared to kill and to destroy and to maim, and, perhaps, to die in the process, to achieve their self determined ideological and/or commercial objectives.[36]

Proposal

Addressing the complex problem generated by Maras in El Salvador requires the state apparatus to act collectively in a coordinated and comprehensive manner to ensure the long term prosperity and security of the nation. This will require an integrated and coordinated effort underpinned by the promotion of executive institutions supported by the Legislative Assembly and the promotion of justice applied by the Judicial Branch integrated by the Courts system and the Supreme Court of Justice.

The main institution of the Executive branch best postured to coordinate policies, lead the effort and coordinate policies to reduce Maras violence is the National Security Council. The council must leverage the General Attorney of the Republic in coordination with the Ministry of Justice and Security, The National Civil Police, and Penitentiary system institutions to ensure required support and collective commitment to coordinate comprehensive efforts; which include technological, human and necessary resources; programs and projects that must be grouped orderly and in a systematic way to develop an economic, social and repressive effort, supported by international and regional cooperation and coordination. The implementation of social policies in areas with significant Maras presence, should be supported by the employment of police and military operations to assist in recovering the confidence of the population in the local and national government.

People are integral, relatives and neighbors need to receive government enabled support to address and overcome their problems and to guide themselves towards the development of their potential, in that measurement, the majority or a part of them, will

also yield to the idea to leave the violence and decide to adopt a viable alternative and exit that allows legitimate integration into society.

In pursuit of these ends main objectives include: decrease the level of corruption within the public and private institutions where the operation of Right State is guaranteed; stimulate the necessary values in order to acquire conciseness and responsibility within the administration of public functions; reinforce institutions responsible for the control of public and private activities; promote values to citizens to avoid culturally corruptive behavior; maintain the necessary controls to avoid the insertion of cells of organized crime within government administration; integrate political positions and separate differences in order to fulfill national objectives.

Some consideration should be oriented to reach the following end state for the government and the implementation of an integral strategy is recommended. This means a change in the approach of the strategy, since the present one has not given the awaited results. This integrated strategy must include components of repression, prevention, rehabilitation and readjustment. Other aspects to consider in pursuing the actions of the integral strategy are as follows:

In order to promote the prevention and citizen participation in gang activity and as a manifestation to improve citizen security, it is necessary by all means to recover public spaces by investing in social infrastructure that allows young people an alternative use of their free time. In addition to encouraging the collaboration of authorities, businessman and local organizations, the nation must ensure that gang violence is viewed as a collective problem that requires stimulating the participation of the people with authorities to solve the problem.

In order to promote coexistence among people, the mass media, churches, universities and the education community, can help to communicate the importance of respecting the coexistence of norms, promoting values and respecting the rights of the all.

In order to prevent young people from being involved in criminal activities the integrated strategy should be adapted to the Salvadoran reality based on the successful experiences of other countries and create an alliance between governmental institutions and organizations of civil society that work towards the prevention of youth violence by creating diverse occupational industries or factories of different specialties.

In order to control the circulation and use of firearms, it is necessary to promote responsible prohibition of firearms in public spaces and execute campaigns that educate the population on the risks of the carrying of firearms.

In order to prevent social violence, it is necessary to promote a policy of equality, access to education for young people of low income families, and the promotion of technical careers. It is necessary to create networks of social protection in urban areas, like prevention in educational centers, recreation and sports facilities and highlight the fundamental role of the family in the inculcation of values.

In order to establish better levels of inter institutional coordination, entities responsible for justice and security administration must establish a true coordination mechanisms that helps to reduce the criminal index and impunity, thereby creating a culture in the population that respects the rule of law.

In order to reduce impunity, the public security force and the penal justice system must be reinforced, and requires greater effectiveness in the use of the resources assigned to the public security and penal justice.

In order to strengthen the statistics and information of penal justice, actions in promoting the consolidation of a unified and reliable system of criminal statistics must be considered.

In order to promote regional and hemispheric cooperation, it is necessary to continue searching for solutions associated with Salvadoran's deported with criminal records, and also support with technological means, police intelligence and the opportune exchange of information.

In order to strengthen rehabilitation programs, young people must be integrated into the productive activity of the country, and prison programs must be developed and considerations taken to turn jails into true disciplinary centers that do not continue to serve as schools of crime. At the moment the Public Security Council conduct rehabilitation programs such as the farms schools and tattoo removal initiatives, among others. These programs must be strengthened with the support of the private institutions.

In order to achieve unity of effort, the entire Salvadoran population must consider the violence generated by Maras as a national problem and every individual should be involved in a strategic communication initiative, where all the population and different actors should have the same voice and unity of intent.

Conclusion.

The violence in El Salvador has grown and it has become so complicated that it must be seen as a national problem and not as a fragmentary, temporary and dispersed

consequence. As a result, this problem demands integral responses within a permanent strategy and systematic policies, not with single projects or programs.

The problem of Maras in El Salvador is a situation that has overflowed into Public Security and the failure to establish opportune and effective strategies by the institutions responsible for Justice and Public Security in the government, supported by other institutions of the State, will affect the governability, stability and development of the country.

The complexity and expansion of Maras in El Salvador requires that the entire State apparatus orient to resist them, but not in the traditional or altruistic approach that includes many of the programs that have been implemented.

Policies must be cradles in democratic processes of information and planning oriented to the profit of objectives and goals by means of the rational and efficient use of resources. This basic conception must consider how to differentiate a public policy from a mere program or project that is characterized as being fragmentary, dispersed, and precarious with little reach.

Because the Mara's phenomenon is transnational, all the efforts to curb criminality must have similar reach. In fact, Central American countries and their North American neighbors should plan for increasing trouble. Countries should pay attention to the relations with other elicits such as organized crime, drug trafficking and especially those beginning to show up in Maras with political and economic implications that could end in seriously exodus.

Taking into consideration that organized crime is characterized by structured groups of two or more persons that exist for some time and act in concert with the

purpose of committing one or more offences, and on the basis of criminalization of

organized crime and their complex acts, Maras activities can be considered as

organized crime and directly linked to a new form of warfare.

Maras that are confined to restricted areas are now exporting their transnational

criminal action towards other countries, leveraging parallel aspects such as increasing

economic globalization, the exploitation of opportunities and business market paths

internationally by smuggling, using remarkable communicative technological progress,

and the transfer and advancement of criminal systems.

The vacuum of power left by authorities and plans by the government against

crime and Organized crime, not only fail to control violence, but also generate adverse

effects and are counterproductive, allowing the development and specialization of

gangs to levels of organized crime, causing a loss of confidence in the institutions of the

Justice System and Security.

Endnotes

[1]Message of his Holiness John Paul II for the Jubilee in Prisons, July 9, 2000, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20000630_jubilprisoners_en.html (accessed November 17, 2009)

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